

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-25 (canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) A method of filling an endodontically prepared root canal of a tooth comprising:

applying filler material to the external surface of a distal portion of an elongated structural shaft, the shaft having sufficient rigidity to serve as a vehicle for carrying said filler material into lowermost portions of a root canal;

inserting said proximal portion of said shaft having said filler material thereon into the root canal; and

applying ~~sound~~ energy to said shaft at a frequency sufficiently high to cause said ~~shaft to vibrate at a rate that thereby~~ the surface tension of said filler material ~~is to~~ substantially decreased to cause said filler material and said shaft distal portion to fill the root canal or optionally to allow ~~allowing~~ said shaft to be removed leaving said filler material alone in the root canal.

27. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 26 including:

affixing a signal generating temperature sensor to said shaft and using a signal generated by said temperature sensor to control said application of ~~sound~~ energy to said shaft.

28. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 26 wherein said shaft is of metal.

29. (Previously Presented) A method according to Claim 26 wherein said shaft is of plastic or fiberglass.

1 30. (Cancelled)

1 31. (Currently Amended) A method according to Claim 26 wherein said step of applying
2 ~~sound-energy~~ to said shaft is accomplished by employing piezoelectric energy.

1 32. (Currently Amended) An obturator system for filling an endodontically prepared tooth
2 root canal comprising:

3 an elongated shaft having a proximal portion and a smooth distal portion;

4 filler material applied onto said shaft distal portion, said shaft having sufficient
5 rigidity to serve as a vehicle for carrying said filler material thereon into the lowermost
6 portions of a tooth root canal; and

7 a source of ~~sound-energy~~ that is applied to said shaft at a frequency sufficiently
8 high to cause said shaft to vibrate at a rate that thereby the surface tension of said filler
9 material is substantially decreased to cause said filler material and said shaft distal
10 portion to fill the root canal or optionally to allow ~~allowing~~ said shaft to be removed
11 leaving said filler material in the root canal.

1 33. (Cancelled)

1 34. (Currently Amended) An obturator system according to Claim 32 wherein said source of
2 ~~sound-energy~~ employs piezoelectric energy.

1 35. (Currently Amended) An obturator system according to Claim 32 wherein said source of
2 ~~sound-energy~~ is a laser.

1 36. (Currently Amended) An obturator system according to Claim 32 wherein said source of
2 energy is a coil is-telescopically removable from said shaft proximal portion.

1 37. (Previously Presented) An obturator system according to Claim 32 including a signal
2 generating temperature sensor affixed to said shaft.

1 38. (Currently Amended) An obturator system according to Claim 37 including:
2 circuitry including said temperature sensor by which said source of ~~sound~~-energy
3 is controlled in response to the temperature of said shaft.

1 39. (Currently Amended) A method of filling an endodontically prepared root canal of a
2 tooth comprising:

3 applying filler material to the external surface of a distal portion of an elongated
4 structural shaft having sufficient rigidity to serve as a vehicle for carrying said filler
5 material into lowermost portions of a root canal;

6 inserting said proximal portion of said shaft having said filler material thereon
7 into the root canal;

8 applying energy to shaft of sufficient intensity to decrease the surface tension of
9 said filler material to cause said filler material and said shaft distal portion to fill the root
10 canal or optionally permit,~~and~~ removing said shaft leaving said filler material in the root
11 canal.

1 40. (Previously Presented) The method of filling an endodontically prepared root canal
2 according to Claim 39 wherein the step of applying energy to said shaft is accomplished
3 by the application of sonic energy.

1 41. (Previously Presented) The method of filling an endodontically prepared root canal
2 according to Claim 39 wherein the step of applying energy to said shaft is accomplished
3 by the application of piezoelectric energy.